

**Submission
No 108**

**INQUIRY INTO RATIONALE FOR, AND IMPACTS OF,
NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN
NSW**

Organisation: Griffith City Council

Date Received: 22 September 2020



22 September 2020

The Chair
Ms. Cate Faehrmann MLC
Portfolio Committee No: 7 - Planning and Environment
NSW Legislative Council

Dear Madam Chair,

RE: INQUIRY INTO THE RATIONALE FOR AND IMPACTS OF NEW DAMS AND OTHER WATER INFRASTRUCTURE IN NSW

Thank you for the opportunity to make a submission to the above enquiry.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused economic devastation across the world and Australia is not immune to this. The crisis presents an opportunity for rethinking by Governments of all jurisdictions in the Federation to activate visionary infrastructure investment. The importance of food and fibre as a foundation stone to human existence is taking centre stage and Australia must seize the opportunity to scale up the production of primary produce to meet demand. New water storage and distribution infrastructure investment, funded by the public purse, is urgently required to secure the future of primary production in Australia.

For decades the critical importance of new water storage infrastructure has been disregarded by successive Federal and State Governments. Council is delighted that in 2019, the NSW and Federal Governments announced three (3) new or augmented dams in this State. Dungowan Dam, Wyangala Dam Wall Raising and Mole River Dam. While these projects will not directly benefit western Riverina communities, these new/upgraded dams will ultimately reduce the pressure on southern Basin communities such as Griffith to meet downstream requirements.

Council strongly endorses further investigation into the raising of the Burrinjuck Dam wall to improve water storage capacity. Burrinjuck Dam supports the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area that has generated enormous economic dividends for NSW and Australia since its inception in 1912. This irrigation network has the capacity to lift production of food and fibre to another level.

Another project which Council supports further assessment is the "Coffey" Scheme. This project was proposed by Engineer David Coffey in 1984 to divert flows from the upper reaches of the Clarence River into the Murray Darling Basin. This proposal will reduce flooding impact on communities in the Clarence Valley and divert these flood waters to the west for productive use.

The NSW population is projected to grow by approximately 100,000 per annum until 2041 with 80,000 of that annual growth concentrated in the Sydney metropolitan basin. This unbridled growth is unsustainable. Investment in new water storage infrastructure west of the Great Dividing Range will stimulate additional economic activity which will result in higher population growth in the regions thus taking pressure off metropolitan Sydney.

Griffith City Council applauds the NSW Government for showing leadership in proposing a new vision for water storage infrastructure investment.

Yours sincerely,

BRETT STONESTREET
GENERAL MANAGER